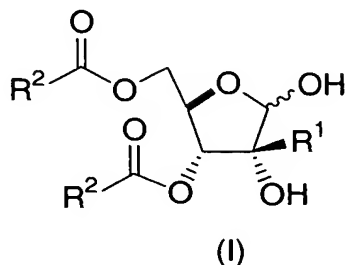
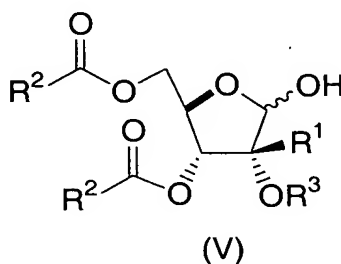


## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for preparing a compound of structural formula I:

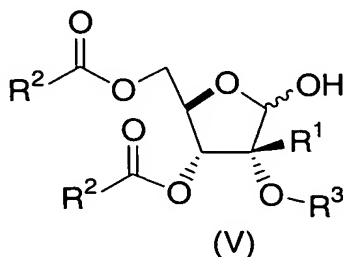


- 5 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is C<sub>2-4</sub> alkenyl, C<sub>2-4</sub> alkynyl, or C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from fluorine, hydroxy, amino, mercapto, C<sub>1-3</sub> alkoxy, and C<sub>1-3</sub> alkylthio; and  
 R<sup>2</sup> is C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl or aryl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine;  
 10 comprising the step of cleaving the R<sup>3</sup> protecting group in a compound of structural formula V:

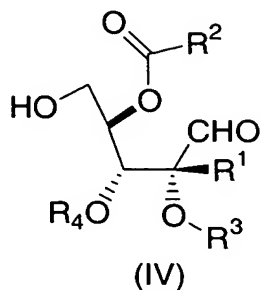


wherein R<sup>3</sup> represents benzyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methyl, methoxy, halogen, and nitro.

- 15 2. The process of Claim 1 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula V:



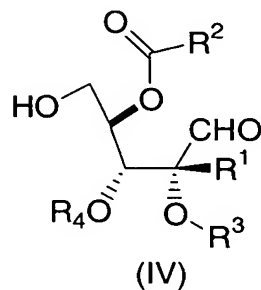
by treating a compound of structural formula IV:



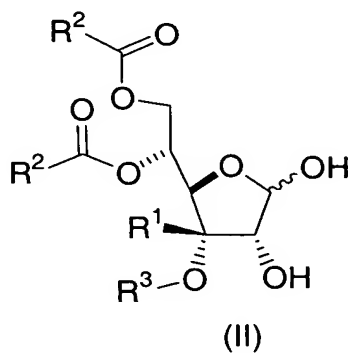
wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen or formyl;  
with base in an organic solvent.

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3. The process of Claim 2 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula IV:

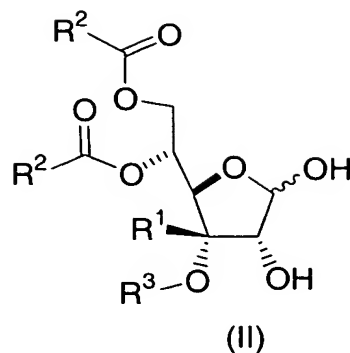


by oxidative cleavage of a compound of structural formula II:

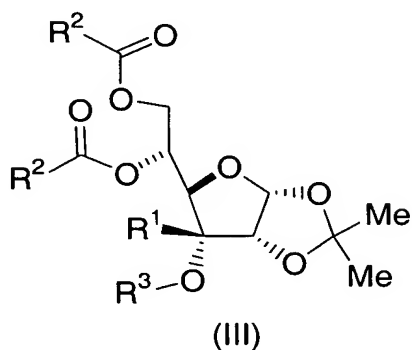


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4. The process of Claim 3 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula II:



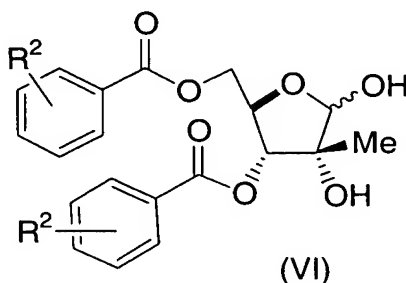
by treating a compound of structural formula III:



with aqueous acid in an organic solvent.

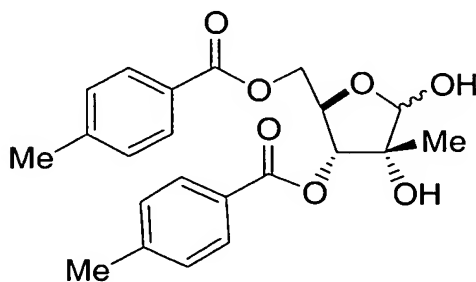
- 5                    5.        The process of Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl.
6.        The process of Claim 5 wherein R<sup>3</sup> is benzyl.
- 10                  7.        The process of Claim 6 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is phenyl unsubstituted or substituted  
with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine.
8.        The process of Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl, R<sup>3</sup> is benzyl, and R<sup>2</sup> is  
phenyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from  
15    methoxy, methyl, and fluorine.
9.        The process of Claim 8 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is 4-methylphenyl.
10.      The process of Claim 1 wherein said R<sup>3</sup> protecting group is cleaved by  
20    catalytic hydrogenolysis.

11. The process of Claim 2 wherein said base is diisopropylamine.
12. The process of Claim 3 wherein said oxidative cleavage is carried out with  
5 periodic acid.
13. The process of Claim 4 wherein said aqueous acid is aqueous tetrafluoroboric acid or aqueous perchloric acid.
- 10 14. A compound of structural formula VI:

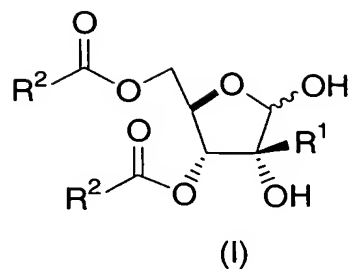


wherein R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, methoxy, methyl, or fluorine.

15. The compound of Claim 14 which is

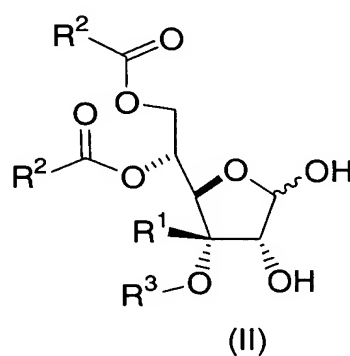


16. A process for preparing a compound of structural formula I:

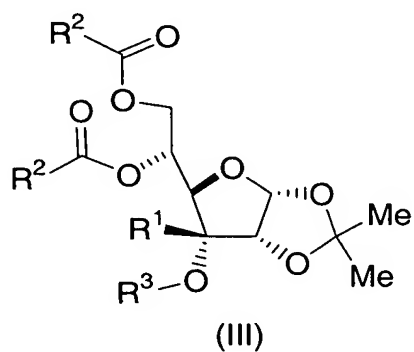


comprising the steps of:

(a) producing a compound of structural formula II:

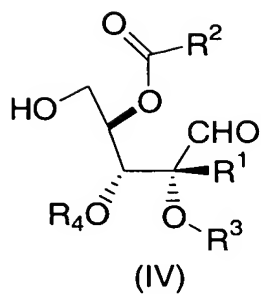


- 5 wherein R<sup>3</sup> represents benzyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methyl, methoxy, halogen, and nitro;  
by treating a compound of structural formula III:



with aqueous acid in an organic solvent;

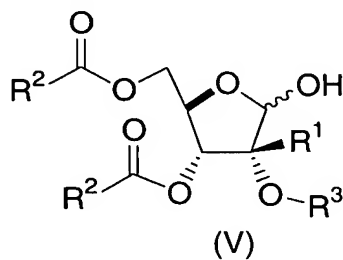
- 10 (b) producing a compound of structural formula IV:



wherein  $R^4$  is hydrogen or formyl;

by oxidative cleavage of the compound of structural formula II;

(c) producing a compound of structural formula V:



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by treating a compound of structural formula IV with base in an organic solvent; and

(d) cleaving the  $R^3$  protecting group in a compound of structural formula V.